



Name of Project: Personal Preference

Name of Organization: New Jersey Department of Human Services' Division of Disability Services

Principle of Choices for Independence: Consumer Direction

Description

New Jersey was one of the 3 original Cash and Counseling Demonstration states which tested the Cash and Counseling model of consumer direction starting in 1998. New Jersey received approval for a Medicaid 1115 waiver to conduct the demonstration in its Medicaid Personal Care Option program starting in 1999. Consumers were given the option to control their own personal care services. They had a monthly budget based on their needs, and could use this money to hire workers, make home modifications, purchase services and equipment, and more. Counselors worked with consumers to develop and revise individual budgets as needed. Consumers had the option of appointing a representative to assist them with participation in the program.

The demonstration results were very positive and show that consumer direction is an attractive option for older adults. For persons with disabilities and older adults, evaluation results indicate that for cash option consumers health outcomes were the same or better, access to authorized services increased, spending on other Medicaid services - such as nursing homes, home health, and other home care waiver services - was reduced, and satisfaction increased, quality of life improved, and participants had fewer unmet needs. The results show that consumer direction is an attractive option for older individuals as well as younger persons. Because of the demonstration's positive results, the program has expanded statewide.

The program's success provides important lessons being used in the current Cash and Counseling expansion states, and for other consumer directed programs. Partners in this effort include the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the HHS Office of Planning and Evaluation and Mathematica Policy Research.

For more information about the New Jersey Personal Preference Program, please visit <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dds> or contact Renee Davidson, Project Manager at 609-292-7800 or Renee.Davidson@dhs.state.nj.us

